

DAVIDSON

Purvis Young – *Under a Concrete Sky*

February 6 – March 21, 2020



New York, NY, February 6, 2020 - Davidson Gallery presents *Under a Concrete Sky*, an exhibition of work from acclaimed painter Purvis Young. The show title references the Miami neighborhood of Overtown, a predominantly black, low-income neighborhood where Young lived, worked, and was a community fixture until his death in 2010. So named for the interstate that was constructed over the area in the 1960s, Overtown was as important to Young as he was to his neighborhood. It is impossible to separate the artist from the district – despite creating work that referenced national and even global issues, Young was decidedly of and for Overtown, befriending its denizens and becoming its de facto artist-in-residence.

This show – the first for Young at Davidson Gallery – represents a wide range of such subjects, including pregnant women, cities and cars, horses, boats, and slave imagery. The works were all acquired directly from the artist in the 1990s and 2000s.

Young was an extraordinarily prolific painter who was entirely self-taught. Despite never even attending high school, his references to canonical art history are undeniable, and his lack of formal education was hardly a limiting factor. Young devoted himself entirely and obsessively to painting, using whatever materials were at hand, including plywood, vinyl siding, furniture, and signs. Despite a tumultuous professional career which left him virtually destitute at the time of his death, his work has been recognized and collected by many of the country's most respected institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and LACMA, to name but a few.